

EIS000219

Good Evening, my name is Pete Wells and I am the General Manager of Plant Edwin I. Hatch Nuclear Plant – located near Baxley, Georgia. I am a graduate of Georgia Tech, with a degree in nuclear engineering. I have over twenty years of nuclear experience, both in the US Naval Nuclear Power Program and the commercial nuclear industry. I am also a licensed Professional Engineer.

For over twenty years Plant Hatch has generated safe, economic, environmentally friendly electricity to around 15% of the citizens of Georgia.

When Plant Hatch was built in the mid seventies, it was capable of handling about twenty years worth of used fuel. The idea was that within twenty years a permanent solution could be found for the central storage of used fuel. Because Plant Hatch has been generating electricity for more than 20 years, our fuel pools are quickly reaching capacity. In fact, unless something is done, we will run out of space in our used fuel storage pools next year.

- 3... In the years that Plant Hatch has been operating, the citizens of Georgia have paid over \$500 Million dollars into the nuclear waste fund. As you probably know, this fund was established by the Nuclear Waste Policy Act that required the government to take possession of utilities spent fuel by 1998. The government missed its contractual deadline, and in fact will probably not start taking possession of used fuel until sometime after 2010. Nationwide this figure is \$16 billion dollars.

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This delay has required us to spend an additional \$22 Million dollars to build an interim spent fuel storage site at Plant Hatch. An additional \$4 Million dollars a year will be spent until the government starts taking possession of the used fuel.

Our facility will be well designed and safe, however, it makes more sense to house used fuel at a centrally located facility where additional levels of safety and security can be built into the design. This not only enhances the overall safety of the nations used fuel, but it is much more economic, having potential savings in the multi-billion to several trillion-dollar ranges.

1 Yucca Mountain is the most <sup>heavily</sup> ~~extensively~~ studied geologic site in the world and the findings of the Environmental Impact Statement support moving forward with this project. There is no scientific reason for the government not to honor its obligation. The reasonable approach is for our generation to take responsibility for disposing of used nuclear fuel rather than passing it to future generations. A central repository is far safer than having the fuel stored in 36 states.

4 Using engineered and natural barriers, the Yucca Mountain repository will protect public health and safety and the environment. *for years to come.*

2... Retrievable storage is an essential part of a national energy strategy. Nationwide, nuclear power generates 20% of our electricity. The issue is not that this facility will allow space for more spent nuclear fuel at my plant and others. We will continue to produce electricity in this country with

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nuclear power for a variety of reasons – economic, strategic and environmental. Nuclear power is currently the only large-scale means of central generation without the reliance on fossil fuels. In the future, as gas supplies dwindle, we must relook at <sup>other options</sup> ~~relying on nuclear fuel~~. Retrievable storage will allow this and also allow safe monitoring of the stored fuel.

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Another issue that has undergone much discussion is of the potential dangers of shipping spent nuclear fuel. During the past 30 years, nearly 3,000 shipments of spent nuclear fuel have been moved safely. During the same time, 700 shipments of U.S. Navy spent nuclear fuel have traveled without incident.

As Mayor Young just stated

Spent fuel travels in containers designed specifically to withstand extreme accident conditions such as a fire, train collision or highway crash.

The Georgia legislature has invested significant tax payer dollars to ensure that our enforcement and response personnel are well prepared to deal with all types of hazardous materials transportation emergencies. Georgia regulators will oversee these spent fuel shipments to ensure public safety is paramount. It is also our duty to ensure the public is educated on this topic so that they can understand the small risks involved, not just react to fears.

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It clearly makes sense to the citizens of this state, and the country to move forward with the plans to site a repository at Yucca Mountain. There is scientific evidence that this is the right thing to do.

Thank you

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